

2009-144-C

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COLUMBIA CONSUMER EDUCATION COUNCIL

P. O. Box 212101 COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA 29221-2101
(803) 466-0696

FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

TO: Docketing staff	FROM: DOROTHY GARRICK
COMPANY: COLUMBIA CONSUMER EDUCATION COUNCIL	DATE: 10/31/2009
FAX NUMBER: Fax:(Docketing Staff) 803-896-5199	TOTAL NO. OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER: 3
PHONE NUMBER:	SENDER'S REFERENCE NUMBER: DOCKET NUMBER 2009-144-C
RE: DOCKET NUMBER 2009-144-C	YOUR REFERENCE NUMBER: N/A

☒ URGENT ☒ FOR REVIEW ☐ PLEASE COMMENT ☐ PLEASE REPLY ☐ PLEASE RECYCLE

NOTES/COMMENTS:

CC:
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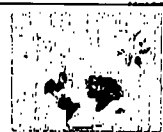
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COLUMBIA CONSUMER EDUCATION COUNCIL

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October 30, 2009

Elizabeth B. "Lib" Fleming, Chairman
Swain E. Whitfield, Commissioner
David A. Wright, Commissioner
G. O'Neal Hamilton, Commissioner
John E. "Butch" Howard, Vice Chairman
Randy Mitchell, Commissioner
Public Service Commission of South Carolina
101 Executive Center Dr., Suite 100
Columbia, SC 29210

Re: DOCKET NUMBER 2009-144-C Application of TracFone Wireless, Inc. for Designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier in the State of South Carolina for the Limited Purpose of Offering Lifeline and Link Up Service to Qualified Households

Dear Chairman Fleming:

As President of the Columbia Consumer Education Council, we support efforts that help provide free prepaid wireless Lifeline and Link Up telecommunication services to low-income consumers in South Carolina at no cost to the state, and at no cost to the state's universal service fund. Using food stamp data alone, it is estimated that hundreds of thousands of consumers could benefit greatly from this service. In this regard, we were very disappointed to learn that the Commission has denied the application of TracFone Wireless, Inc. to provide a wireless Lifeline service to low-income South Carolina households and we urge the Commission to reconsider that decision.

More must be done in South Carolina to provide access to the Lifeline and Link Up programs. A 2002 FCC study estimated that the Lifeline participation rate in South Carolina is at only 6 percent. In other words, more than ninety percent of South Carolina households entitled to Lifeline assistance are not receiving it. Wireless phones can mean major increases in the household incomes of low-income state residents. For example, a March 2008 study by MIT researcher Nicholas Sullivan concluded that providing cell phones to the 38 percent of America's 45 million poorest households now without them -- including millions of seniors, Hispanics and African-Americans -- could help them get work or earn income at levels approaching \$2.9 billion-\$11 billion.

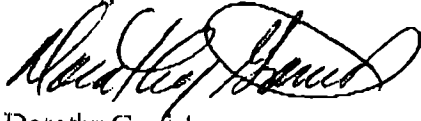
We believe that low-income customers should have the same access to essential wireless services as any other customer. The Lifeline and Link Up programs will provide tangible benefits for South Carolina residents, ensuring that they are able to communicate with their families, employers and emergency services personnel. A Lifeline service that offers a free telephone as well as free minutes of use each month which carry over from month to month, and the ability to send text messages

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ensures that customers get a service they can afford without the anxiety or burden of additional charges.

While we do not endorse any specific company's efforts, we do support the policy of making Lifeline and Link Up services available to more South Carolina residents.

Sincerely,



Dorothy Garrick
President
Columbia Consumer Education Council

CC: Ms. Hammonds

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